

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 4 November 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
4 NOVEMBER 1967

1. Soviet Union

There was much 4th of July-type oratory in the speech Brezhnev gave yesterday. This is what the occasion called for. It was not his function at such a time to generate turbulence, but rather to depict the Soviet ship of state sailing grandly through calm waters. At several points, however, Brezhnev felt obliged to climb down from the level of platitude to give his audience some idea of what preoccupies Moscow now.

On China, he was direct in his criticism of Mao's "nationalist aberrations" but he wound up on the note that present events in China are transient and that "socialism" will ultimately triumph. This is sanctimonious guff at best. Moscow's real posture was expressed in a separate passage on defense in which Brezhnev asserted that the Soviet Union "will not flinch if someone is mad enough to make an attempt, from whatever direction--north or south, west or east...."

Brezhnev used the occasion to renew the call for an international Communist party conference. He laid it on thick about strengthening Communist unity, but nowhere did he deal trenchantly with the real causes of division among the world's Communists. There will probably be some serious talk about a world conference in private sessions with visiting Communist leaders.

On Vietnam, Brezhnev said about as little as he could have under the circumstances, and nothing new.

The Soviet leader said nothing that would qualify as an assessment of the present climate of US-Soviet relations. A nod of thanks to the World War II allies, including the US, was more than balanced by a condemnation of US "aggression."

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2. Cuba

Castro has failed to heed repeated Soviet warnings that his revolutionary policies in this hemisphere are damaging to broader Communist interests.

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Brezhnev was clearly talking about Castro in that passage of his speech yesterday in which he declared that "Marxist-Leninists have always understood that socialism cannot be transplanted from one country to another by means of armed force."

3. South Vietnam

Our embassy was told yesterday by South Vietnamese navy sources that an eight-ship convoy had started up the Mekong for Phnom Penh. This will be good news for the Cambodians, who have been hot under the collar ever since Saigon halted their convoys in mid-October.

4. Venezuela

President Leoni's big Democratic Action Party is badly, perhaps irrevocably, split over who is to be the party's presidential candidate a year from now. The struggle is between party Secretary General Gonzalo Barrios, who is favored by top party leaders, and Luis Beltran Prieto who has a large popular following, particularly among the younger, more militant rank-and-file.

If the party breaks in two, which seems likely at this point, Leoni will lose his majority in Congress and be reduced to the status of a lame duck.

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

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5. Congo

The mercenary group that moved into Katanga Province night before last has made some headway. At last word it was near Kolwezi, about half way to the provincial capital from its starting point on the Angolan border.

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The invaders are few in number and we suspect their main purpose is diversionary. The aim may be to take the heat off Schramme's forces at Bukavu, but this could be simply the opening phase of a bigger operation yet to come.

In the meantime, the Congolese army offensive in Bukavu seems to be making progress

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6. Nigeria

The federal government, confronted with major reconstruction costs, is now weighing a renewed Soviet offer of \$56 million in economic aid credits. Whether or not the Nigerians snap up the offer, they will likely use it to pry more aid from Western sources.

7. Tanzania

President Nyerere will look darkly on Stokely Carmichael's efforts to set up a permanent "Black Power" mission in Tanzania when he hears some of Carmichael's latest rantings. Carmichael, in Tanzania this week on a busy schedule arranged by the Cuban embassy, told local reporters, among other things: "Julius Nyerere is a clown...African leaders disgust me... all this talk about African unity is a joke...the Congolese are scum."

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

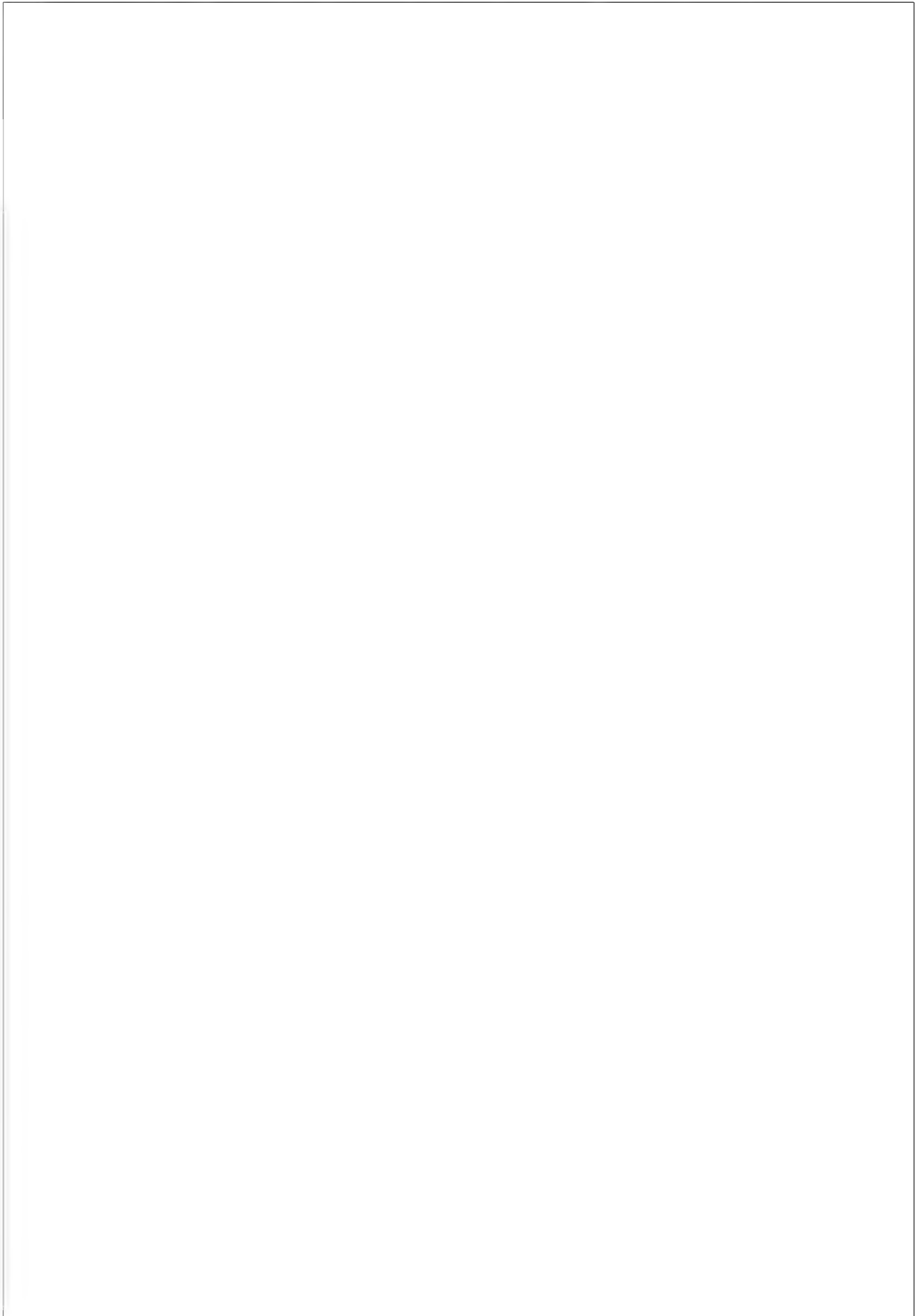


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4 November 1967



**Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



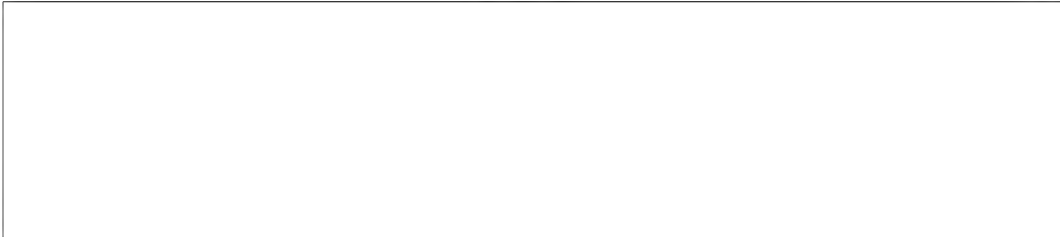
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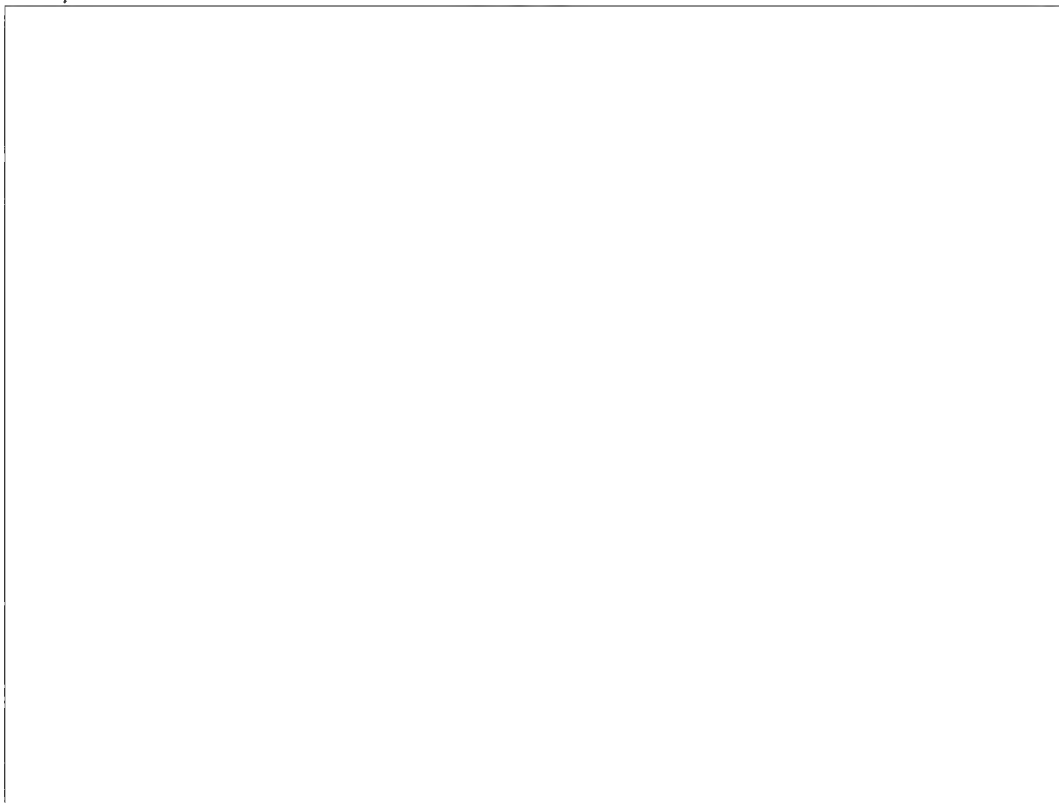
Hanoi Turns Down Request of American News
Agency: [redacted]
[redacted] the North Vietnamese deny permis-
sion for an American Broadcasting Company news
staff correspondent and camera crew to visit North
Vietnam.

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More on Hanoi's Attitude: Xuan Thuy, former North Vietnamese foreign minister and member of the party central committee, recently expressed Hanoi's usual hard line position on the war. His remarks came in an interview with a Cuban correspondent [redacted]

[redacted] on 2 November. The harsh tone of Thuy's statements may have been dictated by this forum, but it was in keeping with virtually every recent North Vietnamese pronouncement on the war.

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Thuy concentrated on North Vietnam's demands for a settlement. He said the US must "unconditionally and finally" put an end to the bombings and other activities against the North, it must withdraw all its forces from the South, and it must allow the Vietnamese people to resolve their problem for themselves. He said that "only in this way can the problem of Vietnam be solved," and added that any proposal for talks must be made by "those mainly guilty of the aggression against Vietnam."

Thuy declined to predict what actions the US would take in the future, but said that although the US is "bogged down" and "unable to find a way out," it is not yet ready for a "reasonable solution." He said that President Johnson insists the US has been seeking peace for a long time, and that Hanoi remains silent, while in fact, "Hanoi opened the door to peace a year ago" when Foreign Minister Trinh said talks could take place after

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an unconditional cessation of the bombings. The US, he claimed, has "sought all kinds of pretexts in order not to enter that door."

Thuy ridiculed US talk about the 1954 Geneva Agreements, saying the US is silent about the most important part of the agreements referring to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Vietnam. He accused the US of wanting to turn the 17th parallel into a "state frontier between the two countries."

He said that North Vietnam's position is that if the US sincerely wants "talks which are consistent with our position," then "let us talk," but that if the US wants to continue the war Hanoi is prepared to "accept the challenge."

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Brezhnev on Vietnam: Brezhnev's comments on Vietnam in his keynote speech at the Soviet anniversary celebration were neither extensive nor particularly striking. He condemned the crimes of the US military, "which bring to memory the sinister deeds of the fascist monsters," and lauded the courage of the Vietnamese. He reasserted Moscow's determination to keep assisting the Vietnamese, called attention to the solidarity of socialist aid, and then took the expected slap at Peking for allegedly preventing the coordination of aid from the socialist countries. He castigated this as an action which is rendering the military successes of the Vietnamese less effective.

Brezhnev obviously had no desire to make the Vietnamese section of the speech a controversial one. The delegation from Hanoi may have been somewhat discomfited at the charge that Chinese intransigence was hindering the progress of the war, but the charge was nothing new.

II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Vietnamese Communists Thank American Anti-War Groups: The Viet Cong's "Committee for Solidarity With the American People" has sent messages to groups of Americans living in France and Britain

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who are opposed to the war. According to a 2 November Hanoi International Service broadcast in English, the Viet Cong committee thanked the Americans for their "active participation" in the 21 October anti-war protest and called on the American people to step up their activities to compel the US government to end its "aggressive war" in Vietnam.

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